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TITLE OF THE INVENTION

MACHINE INTERFACE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

10 The present invention generally relates to a machine interface to allow a user to select a machine operation from amongst a plurality of possible machine operations.

15 A great deal of effort has been expended in the prior art in order to solve the problem of how to interface a machine to a user to enable a user to more readily control the functioning of a machine.

20 When there are a plurality of possible machine operations which can be carried out and a user cannot uniquely and immediately identify the operation which the user requires to be carried out, it becomes a problem as to how to interface the machine to the user to enable a machine to quickly and efficiently select a desired machine operation. For example, when accessing a database which contains retrievable information, a user may not know the exact identity of the data which is required, e.g., the file name of a picture or a document. The problem is thus how to interact with the user to extract the necessary information to identify a required record.

25 This problem is also applicable to directing incoming calls in a call centre. In such a system, a user wishes for a call to be routed to a particular destination but that destination is not known. Thus in order to arrive at the target destination, a user must be prompted to input information. This is typically achieved by asking questions of the user in order to extract the necessary information.

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A solution to this problem is disclosed in a paper entitled "A Vector-Based Natural